



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2011

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DON'T CATCH THE WRONG KIND OF SPRING FEVER!

County Urges Residents to Beware Of Disease-Carrying Pests

Spring is in the air, which means county residents are probably dreaming about beautiful weather and outdoor activities --- not worrying about mosquitoes, rodents, West Nile virus, hantavirus, plague and tularemia.

And they shouldn't have to worry, San Diego County Environmental Health officials said, as long as they take simple steps to protect themselves and their families from disease-carrying animals and insects.

"While these diseases do exist in San Diego County", said Department of Environmental Health Director Jack Miller, "they are preventable if simple precautions are taken."

A number of animals and insects can carry and transmit diseases. Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus, western equine encephalitis and St. Louis encephalitis. Ticks can transmit Lyme disease and tularemia, also known as "Rabbit Fever." Fleas from infected squirrels can transmit plague. Wild rodents, particularly deer mice, can carry hantavirus, which people can contract by inhaling dust particles carrying the virus from rodent droppings and nesting materials.

But people can protect themselves. Avoid or prevent being bitten by mosquitoes and ticks by wearing long pants, long-sleeved shirts and staying on marked trails when hiking, and by using insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535. It is important to follow label instructions on insect repellents because products are not approved for every insect. Don't set up tents near rodent burrows or feed squirrels when camping. Avoid hantavirus by being careful when opening cabins for summer, keeping mice out of houses, garages and sheds, and by using wet-cleaning methods (below) to clean up rodent infestations and droppings.

Use "wet-cleaning" methods to prevent inhaling hantavirus:

- **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM INFESTED AREAS.**
- Ventilate affected area by opening doors and windows for at least 30 minutes.
- Use rubber gloves. Spray a 10 percent bleach solution (2 tablespoons bleach to 1 cup of water) onto dead rodents, rodent droppings, nests, contaminated traps, and surrounding areas. Let the disinfectant stand for at least 15 minutes before cleaning. Clean with a sponge or a mop.
- Place disinfected rodents and debris into two plastic bags, seal them and discard in the trash.
- Wash gloves in a bleach solution, then soap and water, and dispose of them using the same double-bag method. Thoroughly wash your bare hands with soap and water.

For more information, contact the County Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888 or visit www.sdvector.com., or click to view: ["The Airborne Menace" Hantavirus Video](#). ##

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